DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 293 292 EC 202 491

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TITLE You Show, I Grow! Project Enlightenment.
INSTITUTION Wake County Public School System, Raleigh, N.C.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 49p.; For related documents, see EC 202 488-497.
AVAILABLE FROM Project Enlightenment, 501 S. Boylan Ave., Raleigh, NC 27603 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Development; *Child Development; *Cognitive Development; *Early Childhood Education; Kindergarten Children; *Psychomotor Skills; *Sequential Approach; *Skill Development

ABSTRACT

This book is designed to help teachers, assistants, and volunteers who work in day care centers, preschools, and kindergartens teach basic skills to young children (ages 3-6) when they are ready to acquire the skill. Separate sections are provided for each of 11 skill areas: (1) listening; (2) memory; (3) colors; (4) counting; (5) geometric shapes; (6) sequencing; (7) cutting; (8) writing; (9) tying; (10) concepts; and (11) working independently/completing tasks. Each section summarizes the importance of the skill in the overall development of the child and cites signs that typically indicate a child is ready to acquire the skill. It then describes a variety of activities that can be used to help children through the series of progressive steps necessary to master each skill. Line drawings are used to illustrate the suggested activities. (VW)

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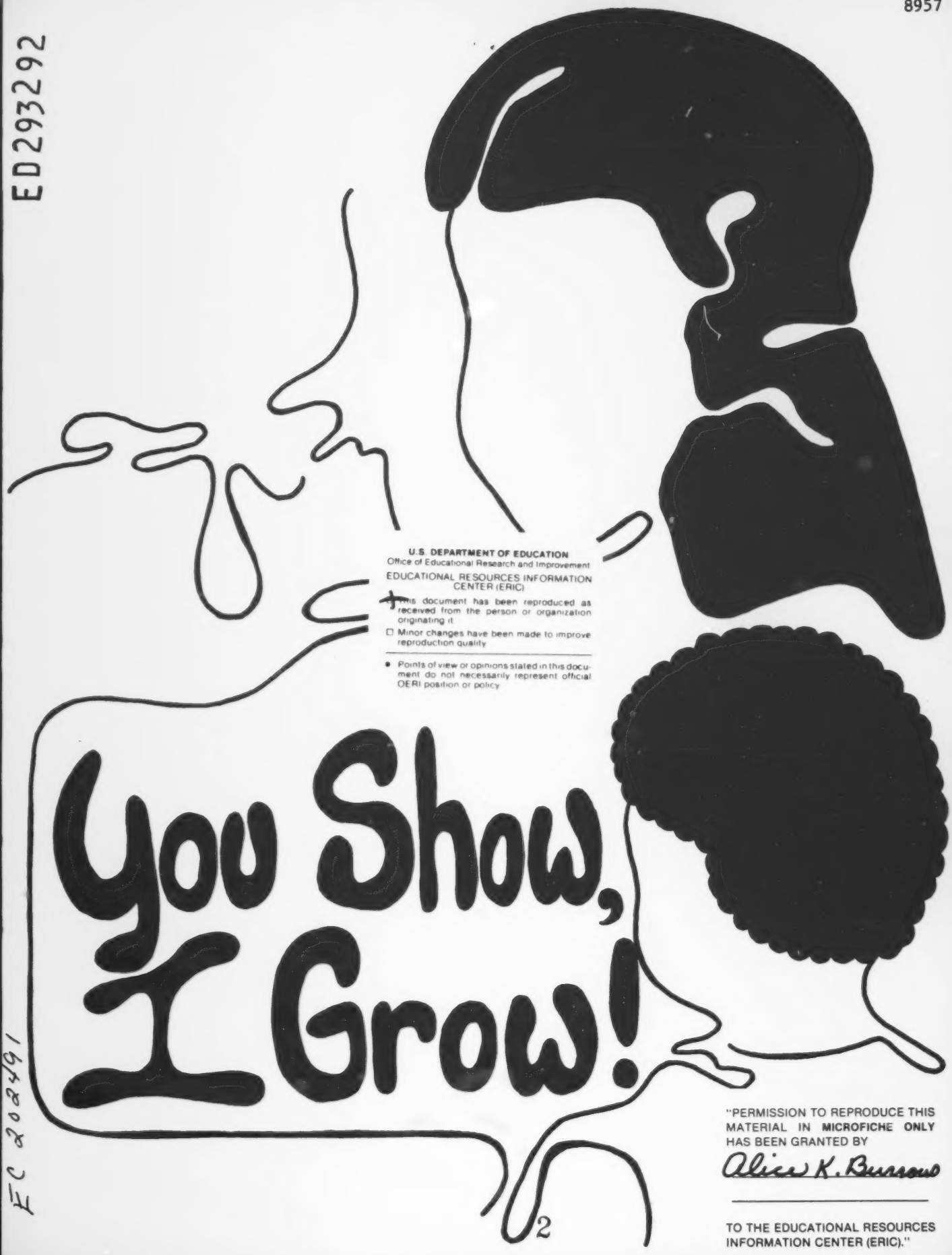

You Show, I Grow!

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You Show, I Grow!

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To Joe and Tommy
and all the students in the
Demonstration Nursery School
who taught me so much about
little children and how to help
them.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Charles L. Kronberg for his help and support, not only in the preparation of this book, but for his advice and encouragement during my years as therapist in the Demonstration Nursery School. I would also like to thank the Teacher-Parent Consultants and Meliene Rae Evans, student intern, for their help.

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Introduction

Little children naturally enjoy learning new things, and it is rewarding for adults to share in their learning experiences. To see the sparkle in their eyes that tells you they have mastered a task you have taught them is a special delight. However, to see their eyes read confusion is sometimes puzzling for us as teachers and parents.

Confusion, frustration, and lack of interest are often displayed by children when we begin to teach them a task at a level beyond their ability and understanding. All children do not develop skills at the same rate. Because each child is unique, when trying to teach a new skill it is important to first note the current level at which a child is working. Start there, and keeping the child's interest and involvement, go through the necessary steps with positive expectations and warm encouragement.

In this book you will find that tasks have been defined in progressive steps. It is necessary for children to have certain prerequisite skills before they can perform more complex tasks. Each section provides a variety of enjoyable activities to help children through all the steps necessary to master a skill. There is also space for you to note those activities most valuable, as well as adaptations you might develop.

This book has been written to help those who work with little children, three through six years old, in settings such as day care centers, preschools, and kindergartens. It is meant to be used by assistants and volunteers as well as teachers. While the activities included in this book are designed for classroom use, many can be adapted for use in the home — by parents — little children's very first teachers! <u>You Show, I Grow</u>.

Listening

Little children probably have a more difficult time acquiring good listening skills than any other skill. One reason is because they are so anxious to tell of their own experiences. Because we do not want to stifle their language development it is often hard to find middle ground. One of the best tools we have to teach listening skills is modelling. By carefully listening to children when they speak to us they are more likely to listen when we speak to them.

Read stories to the children with enthusiasm and expression.

Let the children play games such as "Simon Says", "Gossip", and "I'm Going On A Trip."

Use your voice as a teaching tool. Whispering instructions to a child often gets his attention more quickly than raising your voice level above his.

Take the children on a walk and have them listen for sounds. Write down the sounds as they tell them to you, and follow up the walk by writing a story with them about the sounds they heard.

Provide story and picture books that have tapes or records that go with them. Let the child listen to them, turning the pages in the book when indicated on the recording.

Let the children listen to and follow records that have body movement instructions. Also provide records that have everyday sounds for the children to identify.

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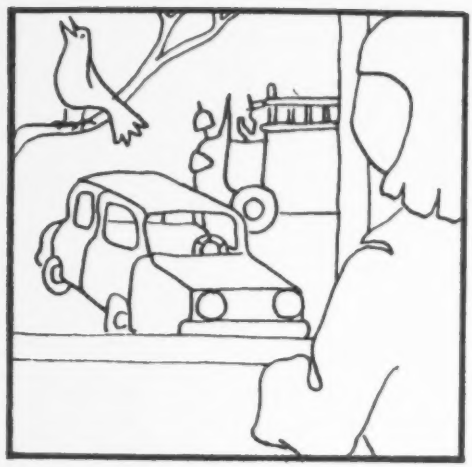
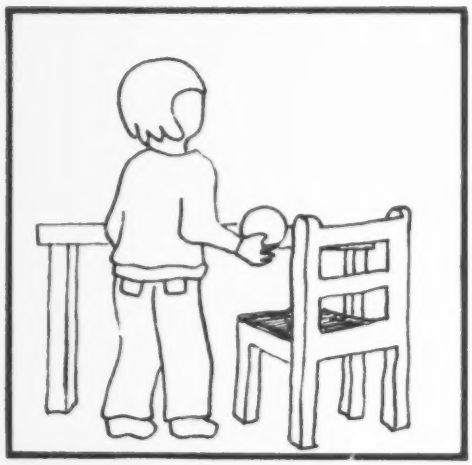
1. 

Have the child identify and imitate everyday sounds... siren, car motor, brakes squeaking.

2. 

Have the child follow one and two step directions. "Please take the ball off the table and place it under the chair."

3.

Have the child fill in missing words of nursery rhymes and then say rhymes independently.

4.

Have the child follow three and four-step directions. "Please put your painting in the hall to dry. Give your smock to Blain and tell her it is her turn to paint."

5.

Read a story to the child and ask him a question after each page, increasing to 2, 3, and then 4 pages before questioning as his listening skills progress. Cue by pointing to pictures if necessary.

6.

Have the child retell stories appropriately sequencing four events.

Note: When talking to a child it is important to maintain eye contact.

Memory

Little children enjoy talking about themselves and their play. Play is children's work and by listening to them talk about their activities we not only enhance their memory skills but we model listening skills for them. The following activities are play as well as memory work.

Notes

Play games that require recall such as "Simon Says", "Follow The Leader", and "We're Going On A Trip. (On the trip we will carry....)

Have the child look at a picture for 30 seconds. Remove the picture and have him tell you all the things he remembers seeing.

Play Concentration. Cards may be made of tag board with pictures cut from magazines pasted on them.

Have the child learn his full name, address, and telephone number.

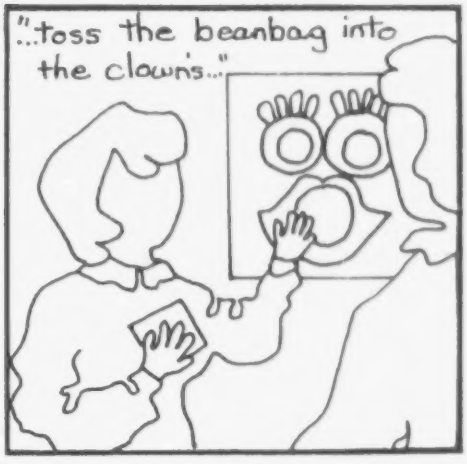
Allow the child to give directions for games and toys to his peers.

Listen to the child sing songs, say jingles, and tell you what he had for breakfast and lunch.

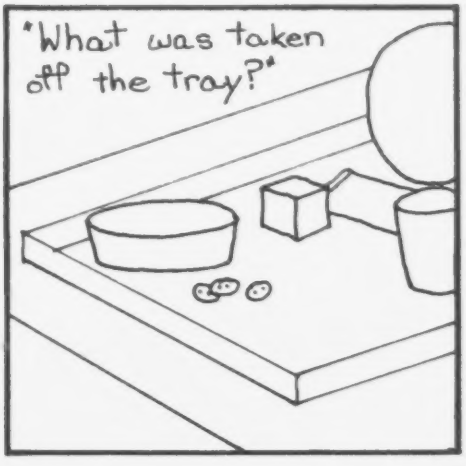
The Next Step

1.

Model for the child by talking about what you are doing while you are working with a game or toy.

2. 

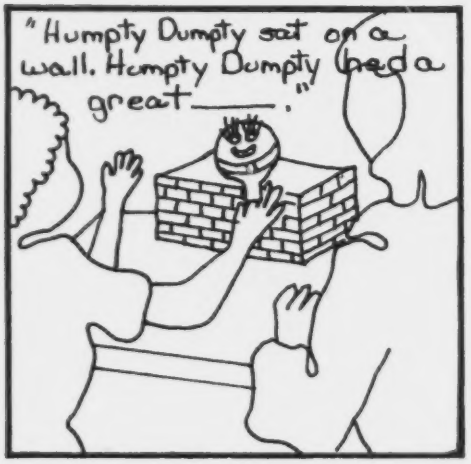
Encourage the child to talk about what he is doing while playing with a game or toy.

3. 

Display three or four items on a tray. Remove one item and ask the child what is missing. Increase the number of items removed from the tray as the child progresses. Also increase the number of items displayed.

4.

Read a story to the child and ask him specific questions about the story. Begin with simple questions on each page in order to assure success, gradually increasing expectations of the child's recall.

5. 

Encourage the child to memorize nursery rhymes and finger plays. Begin by having the child complete the rhyme one word at the time.

6.

Ask the child to follow increasingly more complex directions. Begin with simple, one step directions and increase number of steps as the child can follow them.

Colors

Little children are stimulated by color. Bright, cheerful surroundings provide a pleasant learning atmosphere. Color is everywhere and provides a never ending opportunity for children to learn to name colors.

Notes

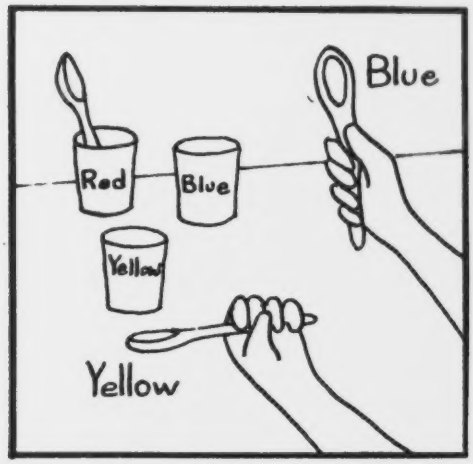
When directing children to various centers or activities, call them by a color they are wearing i.e., "Would all the children who have the color blue on today please get their coats?"

Color water different colors for water play.

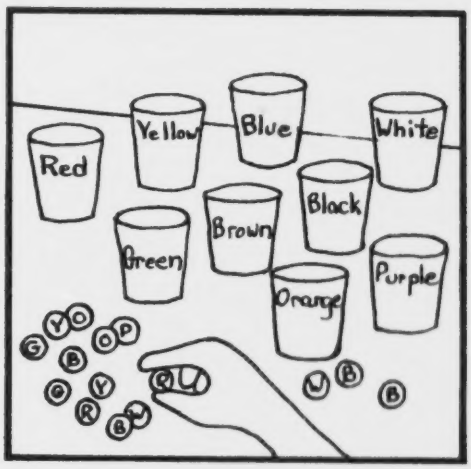
Provide a color center in the classroom. Display items of a specific color and ask the children to bring from home that color object for display in the center. Change the center color about every fifth classroom session.

Pretend to go on a "color shopping trip" in the classroom. Assign each child a different color, and let him walk through the classroom placing an object of his assigned color in a shopping bag.

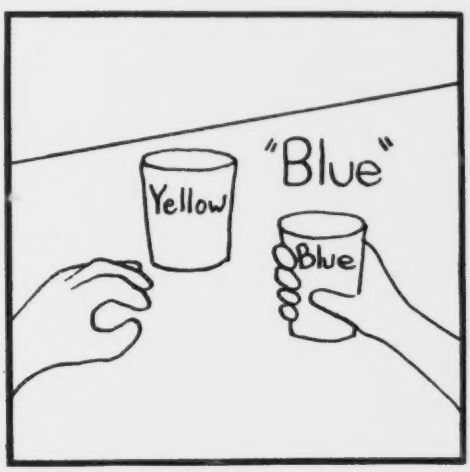
The Next Step

1. 

Have the child match like colored objects.

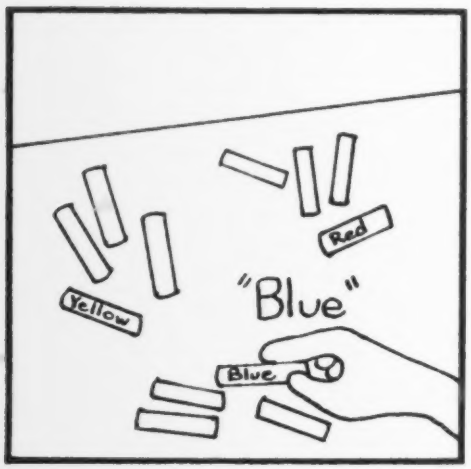
2. 

Have the child sort objects according to colors.

3. 

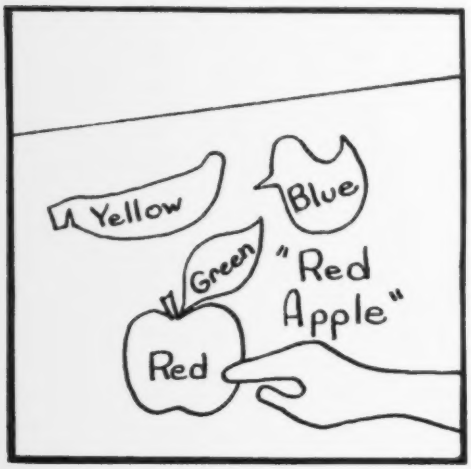
Have the child identify one color by using its correct name. A verbal cue may be necessary. Using two colors say to the child, "This is blue. This is yellow. Please give me the blue."

4.



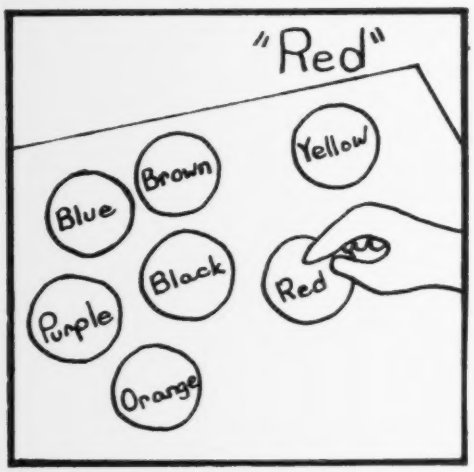
Have the child identify and name red, yellow, and blue.

5.



Have the child verbalize the color of an object with the object's name ... yellow banana, red apple, blue bird, green leaf.

6.



Have the child name the eight basic colors ... red, yellow, blue, green, black, orange, brown, purple.

Counting

Little children enjoy numbers very early in life. From the time they want a cookie in both hands and they are capable of saying, "I'm two" by holding up two fingers to show their age, we can talk about numbers. The first step is being able to count.

Notes

Read stories and sing songs where numbers are stressed, e.g. The Three Pigs, The Seven Dwarfs, Ten Little Indians, and Five Little Turkeys. Have the children act them out.

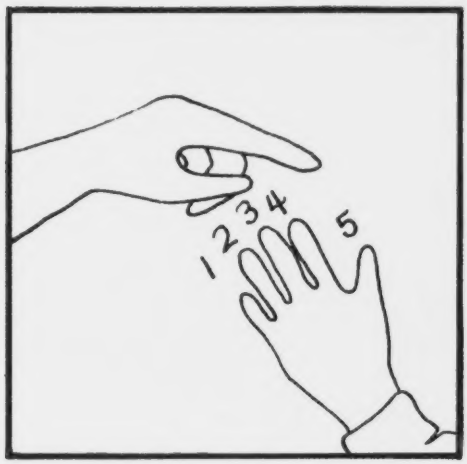
When going up and down steps, count them with the group.

Help the children count the number of students present each day and help them count the number of cups and cookies needed for snack.

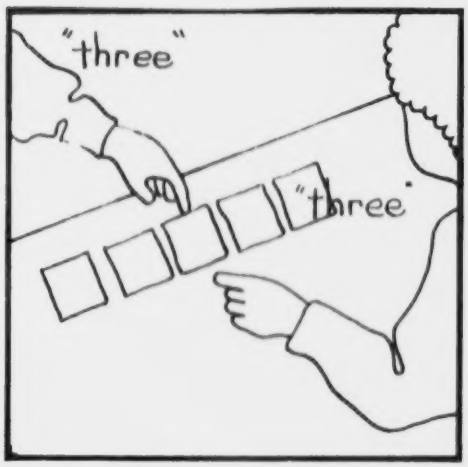
When teaching children to count, you can reinforce the learning of concepts such as more, less, many, few, a lot, and a little.

Have the children use their bodies. Have them hop, jump, or bounce a ball a certain number of times.

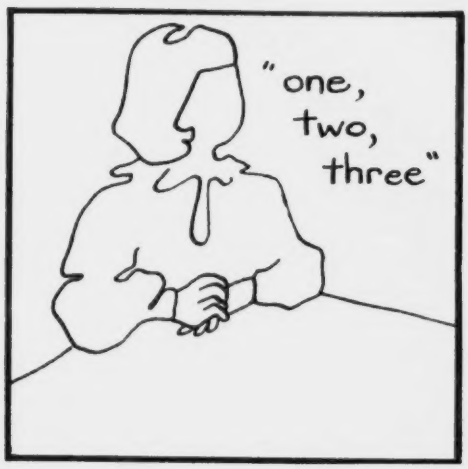
The Next Step

1. 

The child repeats numbers one to five after the teacher, counting his fingers on one hand.

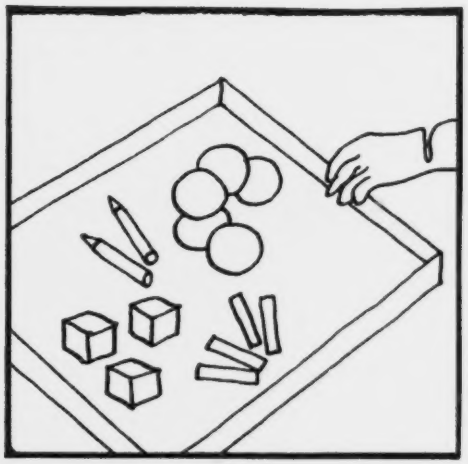
2. 

Line up five objects on a table and count them with the child. Repeat the number after he says them ... "one-one, two-two," etc. Give verbal cues if necessary.

3. 

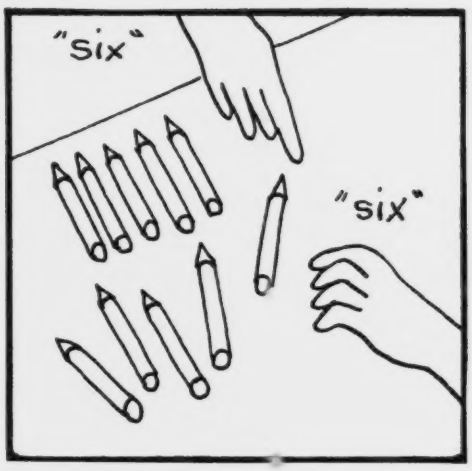
Have the child repeat series of numbers beginning with two numbers and increasing to series of three, four, and five numbers. Begin saying numbers quickly and then pausing between numbers.

4.



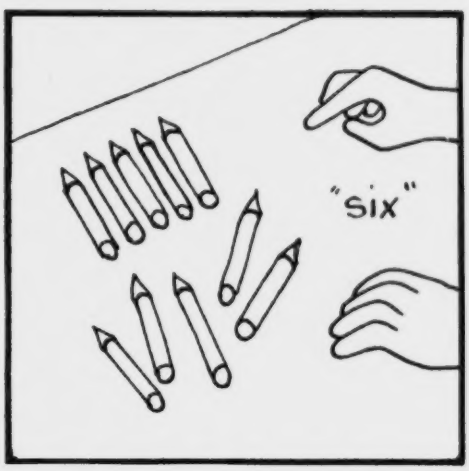
Give the child a container and ask him to bring you two crayons, three blocks, and then four pegs or five felt cut-outs. Remind the child by asking him, "What do I want you to bring me?"

5.



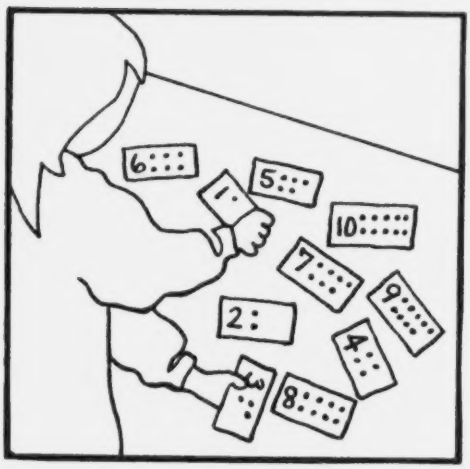
Place ten objects on a table and have the child count the first five independently. Let him repeat the numbers six through ten after you.

6.



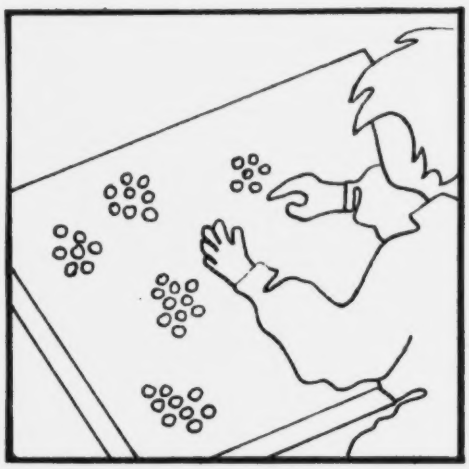
Ask the child to count the ten objects on the table independently, giving verbal cues for six through ten as necessary. Withdraw verbal aid as the child learns.

7.



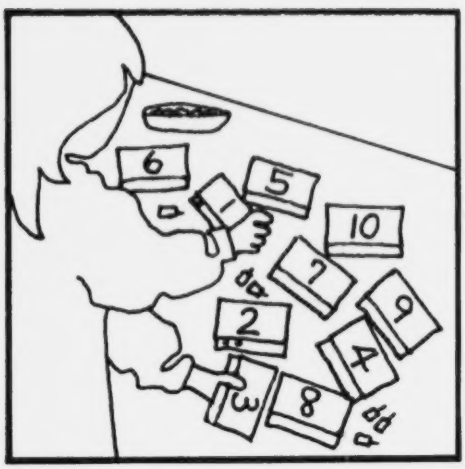
Introduce number concepts by making cards with a numeral and corresponding number of dots. Have the child attach a paper clip on the card for each dot.

8.



Ask the child to give you six, eight, nine, seven, or ten objects. Mix the numbers requested rather than in sequence to reinforce the concept.

9.



Check number concepts by removing aid. Write a number on card, then glue a small sponge under it. Give the child push-pins to place in sponge for the correct number value.

Geometric Shapes

Little children need to learn basic geometric shapes before they are able to relate to more complex shapes such as the letters of the alphabet. It is helpful if shapes are mentioned in conversation with children. Saying, "Look at the square cracker," as opposed to "Look at the cracker," provides extra information in a natural way to reinforce learning about shapes.

Let children use their fingers to make shapes in a tray filled with sand or salt.

Let the child use his fingers to make circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles.

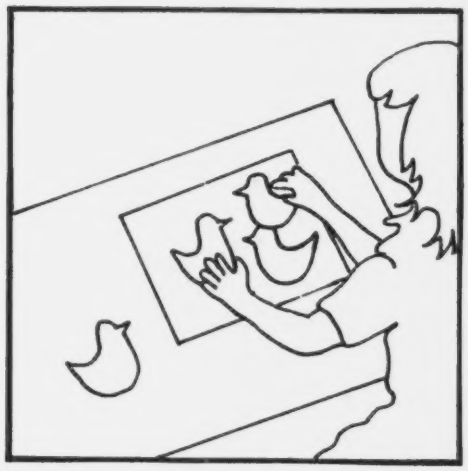
Let the children play a shape game by naming all the objects in the room that are a certain shape, e.g. tables, windows, window panes, book shelves, and books are rectangles. Play the same game with other shapes.

Let a group of children make "human shapes" by lying on the floor and arranging themselves into a big circle, square, etc.

Use tag board and magic markers to make cards with circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles on them. Let the children make "snakes" from play dough and lay them on the lines of the shape.

Make large shapes on the floor with masking tape or rope. Let the child toss a yarn ball into the shape as you name the shape.

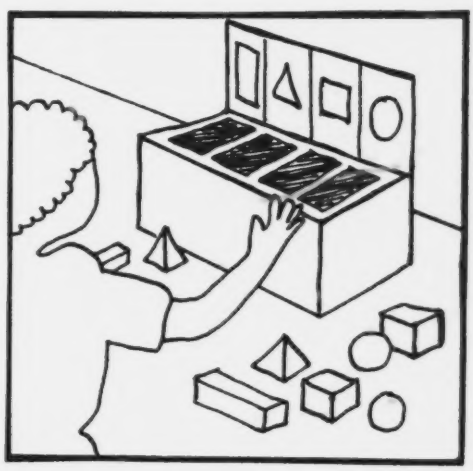
The Next Step

1. 

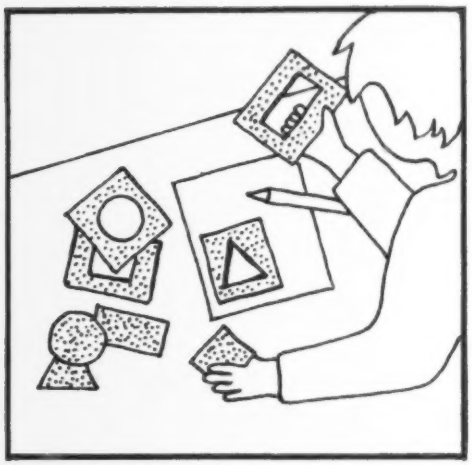
The child must be able to complete a shape form board or puzzle independently.

2.

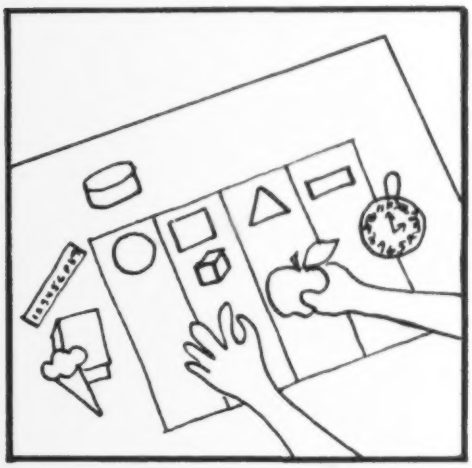
Have the child match circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles cut out of cardboard or wood.

3. 

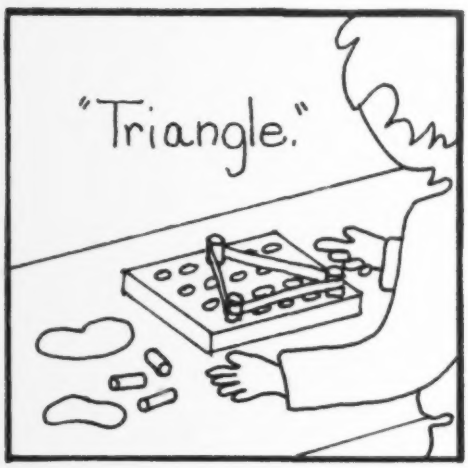
Have the child sort like shapes in a sorting box.

4. 

Have the child feel shapes made of sandpaper. Have him feel and draw inside shape templates as he verbalizes the name of the shape.

5. 

Have the child categorize pictures of objects that are circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles. Have him paste the pictures on a paper in the shape related area.

6. 

Have the child make and name shapes independently using pegs, pegboards, and rubber bands.

Sequencing

Little children first demonstrate their interest in sequence by asking questions like, "When are we going out to play?" "When is Christmas or Hanukkah coming?" "When are we...?" We naturally teach them about sequencing when we make statements like "First we must pick up the toys, then we will have our snack, and then we will go out to play." When children have an order and sequence to their daily lives, it enhances their ability to learn about sequencing.

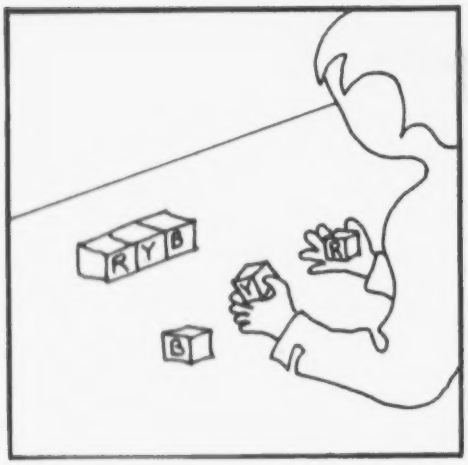
Provide opportunities for creative play. Let the child pretend he is going on a trip in the car. Observe and listen to him tell you what he is doing and the order in which he does it.

Provide a complete outfit of clothing for the child in a basket. Let the child place the clothes in the sequence he would put them on.

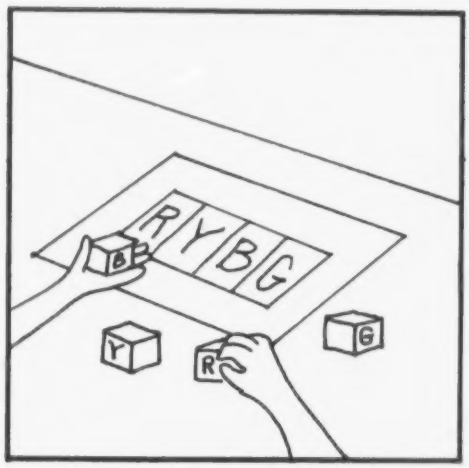
Talk with the child about morning, afternoon, and night. Let him share in the planning of activities for each segment of the day.

Provide opportunities for the child to see foods before and after they are cooked. Allow the child to follow picture recipes and observe the changes before and after foods are prepared. Foods like jello, popcorn, and bacon are particularly useful for this exercise.

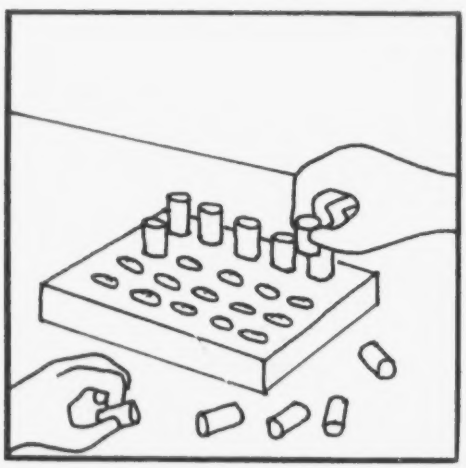
The Next Step

1. 

Place three one-inch cube blocks, of different colors, on a table. Give the child three blocks the same size and colors and ask him to follow the same color pattern.

2. 

Give the child a card that has a color sequence on it. Give him the same number and color of blocks and ask him to match the blocks to those on the card.

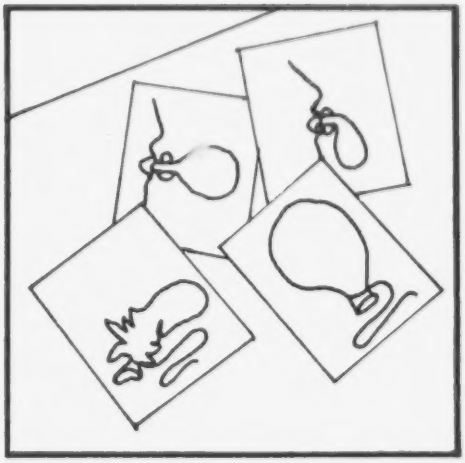
3. 

Place a row of colored pegs in a peg board. Ask the child to follow the same color sequence with more pegs.

4.

Give the child a box of items including a baby dress, a small dress, and a big girl's dress; a pair of baby pants, little boy pants, and big boy pants; a baby shoe, a little child's shoe, and an adult's shoe; a package of seeds, an artificial flower stem with a bud, and an artificial opened flower. Have the child place the items on a table in appropriate sequence.

5.

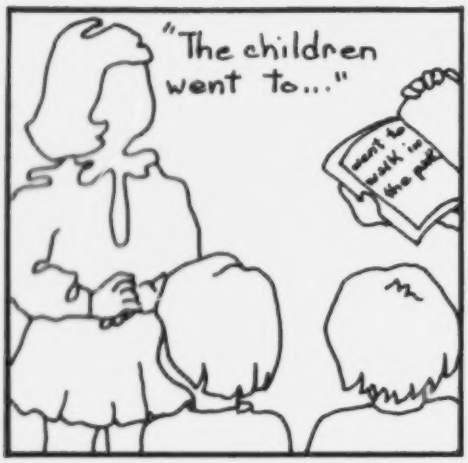


Give the child a series of sequence cards and have him place them in order. Begin with three step sequence cards and progress to cards that show four and five steps. Examples: Three step - 1. A child going up slide steps 2. A child at the top of the slide 3. A child at the bottom of the slide. four step - 1. A deflated balloon in a child's mouth 2. A small size

balloon 3. A large size balloon 4. A popped balloon. Five step- 1. A child writing a letter 2. Placing the letter in an envelope 3. Writing address on envelope 4. Placing stamp on envelope 5. Mailing a letter in the mail box.

6.

Listen to the child tell the events of his morning from the time he got out of bed until a specific time.

7. 

Allow the child to retell a story to you that has been read to the group.

Cutting

Little children need control of their small muscles and fingers in cutting as they do in writing. Little people need scissors of adequate quality to cut materials given them in order to decrease their frustration while learning. The following exercises, along with those suggested for writing, enhance cutting skills.

Notes

As you demonstrate cutting to a child, talk about what you are doing. Words such as up, down, open, close, cut, blades, snip, and handle are important for them to hear.

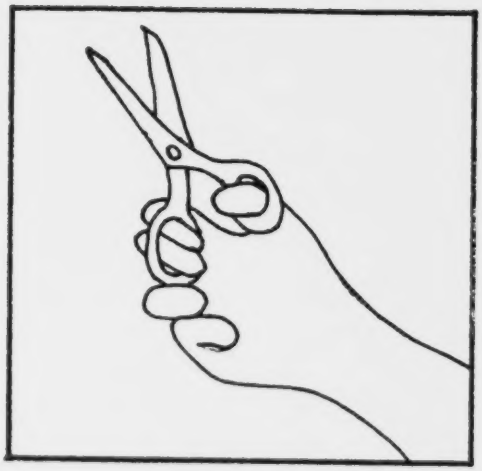
Draw broken lines one inch apart on paper and have child cut between the broken lines.

Ask children to tear paper into small pieces, tear paper on a drawn line, and pick up small items with tongs.

Using heavy paper cut out an oval shape. Let the child draw eyes, nose, and mouth on it and snip the edges to make "fringe" hair.

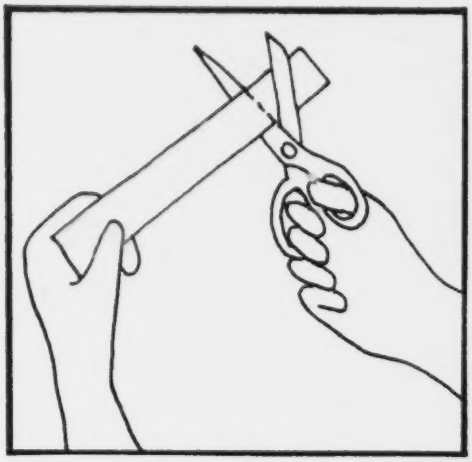
The Next Step

1.



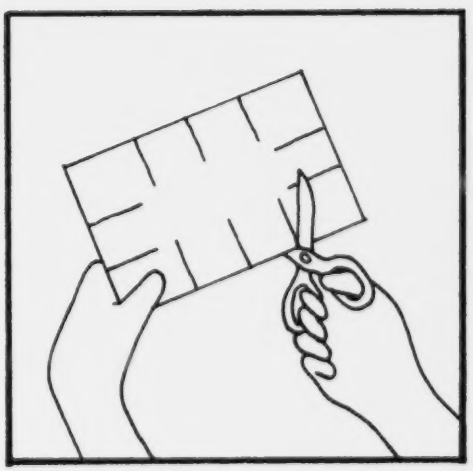
Have the child hold the scissors with his thumb in one handle and his index finger as well as his middle finger in the other handle. The teacher may slip her thumb and middle finger in the scissors to help the child know the feel and movement of the scissors.

2.



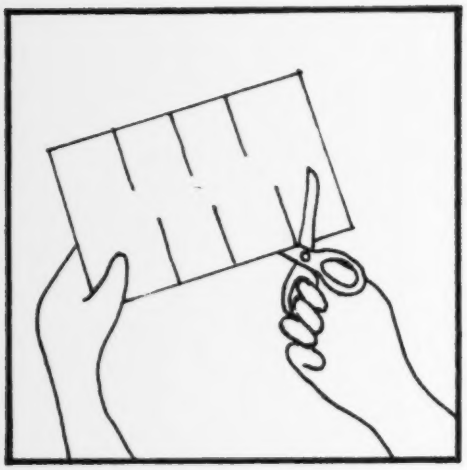
Have the child open and close the scissors independently, snipping small strips of paper. This requires the child to open and close the scissors.

3.



Using a 5" by 7" index card, a manila folder, or a piece of construction paper draw 1" long lines 2" apart. Have the child cut on the lines. This requires the child to open and close the scissors and move the paper.

4.

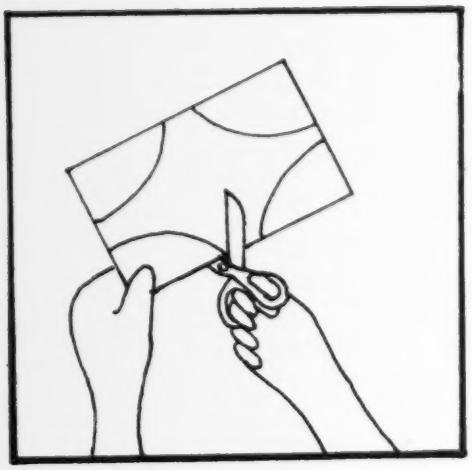


Using the same size paper, extend the 1" lines to 2" long. Have the child open and close the scissors, move scissors forward, and move the paper toward his body.

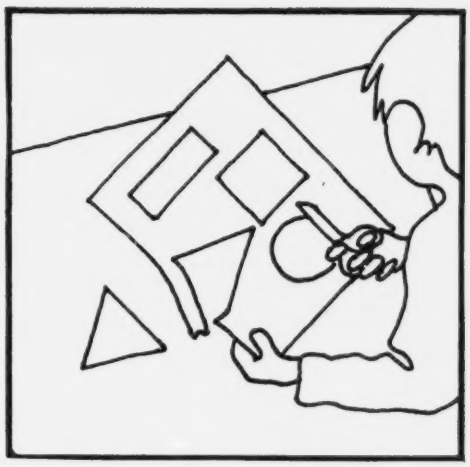
5.

Draw a line down the middle of the paper and have the child cut along the line.

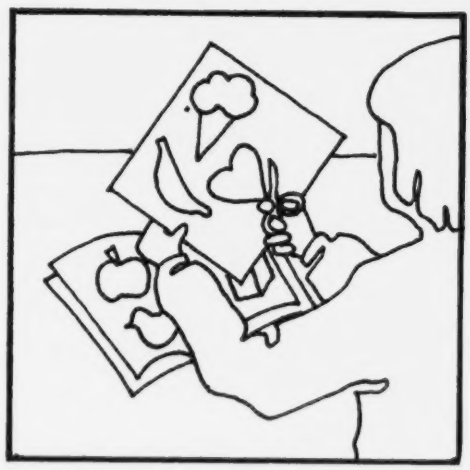
6.



To cut curved lines, draw curved lines at the corners of the cards. Have the child cut along the lines moving the paper as he cuts.

7. 

Draw squares, circles, triangles, and rectangles on construction paper. Have the child cut them out. Guide the paper for him if necessary.

8. 

Give the child sheets from magazines with familiar objects to cut out independently.

Note: When a child is learning to cut it is less frustrating to tear out or cut around a picture for him to cut out, rather than have him maneuver a large piece of paper.

Notes

Writing

Little children need control of their small muscles and fingers in order to be able to write with crayons, pencils, and chalk. The following activities help build a child's control of his small muscles.

Provide activities such as: play dough and clay to squeeze and shape, blocks to stack, finger painting, easel painting, puzzles, scissors, sewing cards, peg boards, and stringing beads.

Put things like sponges, medicine droppers, and small squeeze bottles in water play equipment and things like containers to pour from and into in the sand box.

Thread a large needle with yarn and have the child string cherrios, cut straws, macaroni, and other items with holes in them.

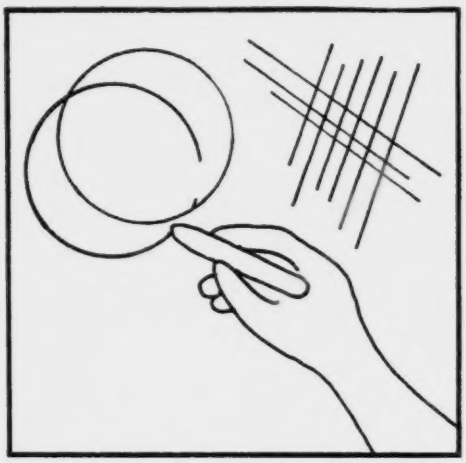
Thread a large needle with yarn and have the child string materials that do not have holes such as styrofoam packing shapes, diced potatoes, cut green beans, etc. (Potatoes and green beans dry to make lovely necklaces.)

Provide small items such as dried beans or pegs and ask the child to pick them up and place them in a container.

Let the child pinch the ends of clothespins and clip them together.

Let the child stick whole cloves in apples to make Pomander Balls (use small apples).

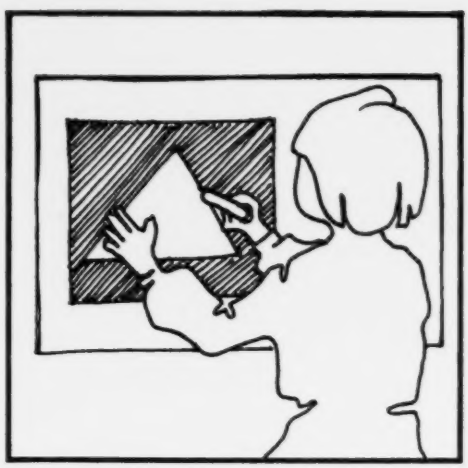
The Next Step

1. 

Have the child practice circles and straight lines with movement in his arm and hand.

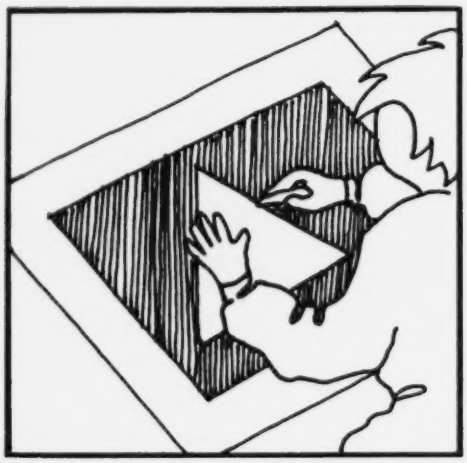
2.

Encourage the child to draw circles and straight lines in salt or sand.

3. 

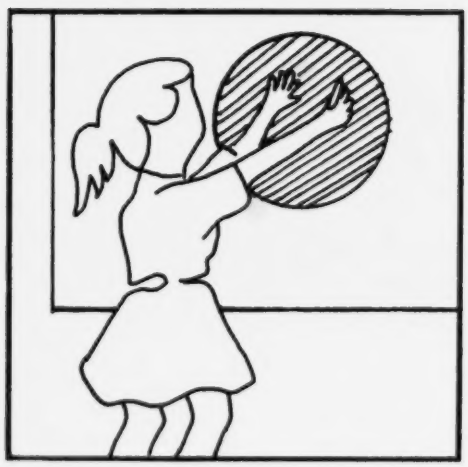
Using a template made from heavy cardboard, have the child trace large cut-out area on the chalkboard.

4.



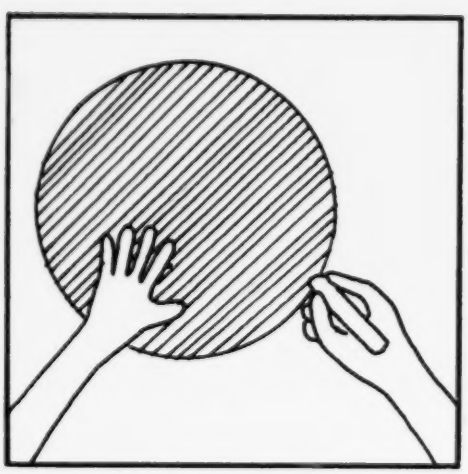
Have the child trace large shapes inside a template on a small lapboard.

5.

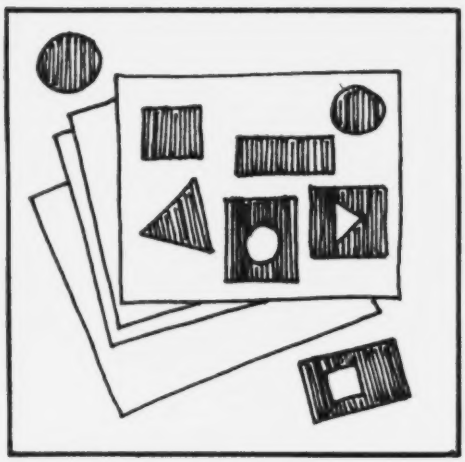


Have the child trace outside a template on a chalkboard.

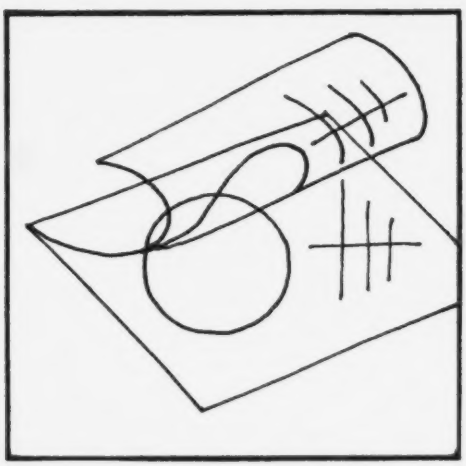
6.



Have the child trace outside a template on a lapboard.

7. 

Have the child trace inside and outside templates on newsprint or construction paper.

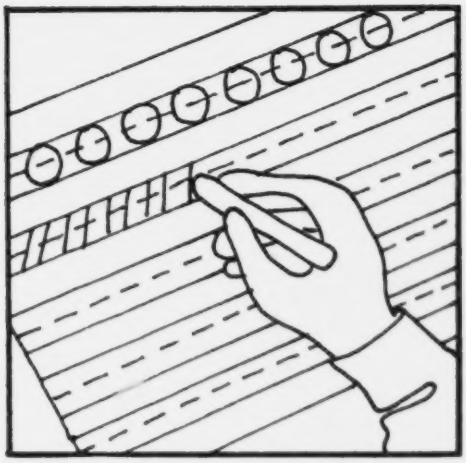
8. 

Have the child trace over circles and straight lines with a washable magic marker on a laminated or plastic covered paper.

9.

Have the child begin drawing circles and straight lines on newsprint or unlined paper.

10.



Introduce lined primary paper.

Note: This is the last step before beginning letters and should be started only after other techniques are developed.

Notes

Tying

Little children often have difficulty learning to tie because it is a very complex skill. It is important for a child to have small muscle and finger control, attention and concentration skills as well as the desire to learn to tie. Otherwise he may become overly frustrated if we try to teach him. All of the activities listed under Cutting and Writing as well as the ones listed here will help develop skills needed for tying.

Provide pipe cleaners for the child to bend and shape.

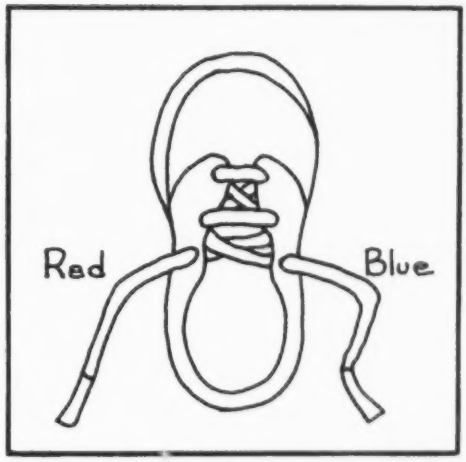
Provide a large-eyed needle and let the child thread it with thin wire.

Give the child an old adult shoe or dolls and books that have laces on them. Let the child practice untying your bow and tying knots.

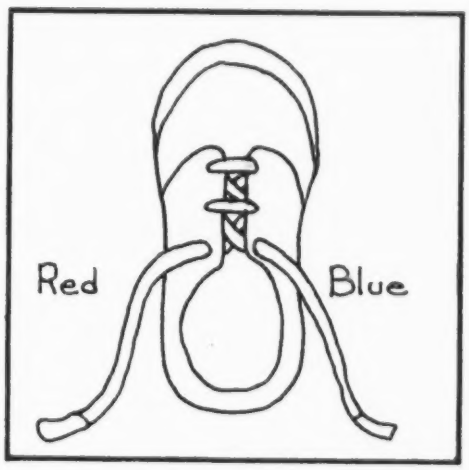
Let the child make paper clip chains.

Notes

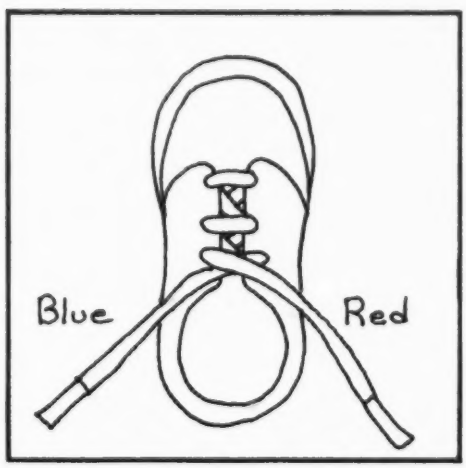
The Next Step

1. 

Cover the end of each shoe lace with a different color of tape (blue and red).

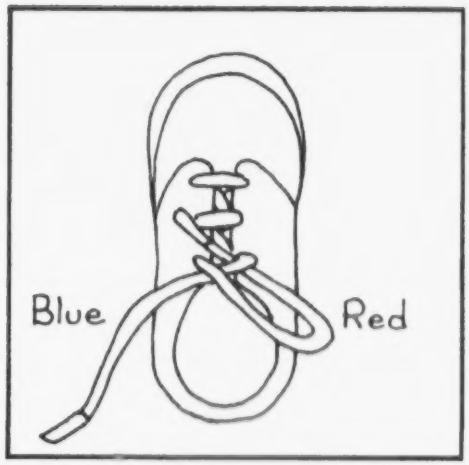
2. 

Place the shoe on a table and have the child pull the laces tightly.

3. 

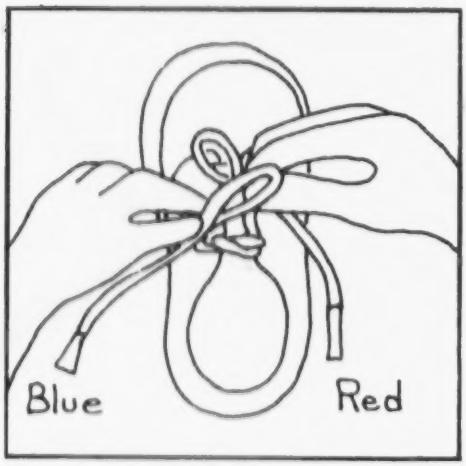
Ask the child to place the red shoe lace on top of the blue shoe lace.

4.



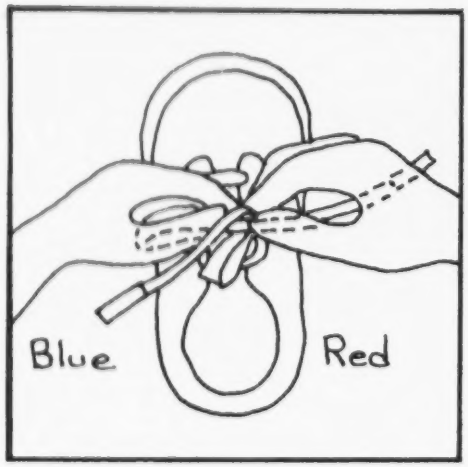
Ask the child to put the red point of shoe lace under the hole that was made when the laces were crossed and pull the laces tightly.

5.



Have the child loop the shoe laces to form two "bunny ears." Loop the "bunny ears" together and pull.

6.



Make one "bunny ear" with the red shoe lace. Hold between "thumpkin" and "pointer." Place blue lace beside fingers and put second "bunny ear" in the hole and pull.

Concepts

Little children need to learn basic concepts e.g. same, different, big, little in order to learn to think and operate in the world – to become thinkers and doers. They need to begin by being able to associate objects, i.e. to know "this goes with that." Association is a major factor in a child's developing reasoning and abstract thinking as he grows older. However, little children learn best when they have concrete objects to help them develop more abstract concepts.

Encourage the child to put away games and toys in groups.... blocks with the blocks, games with the games, books with the books.

Provide opportunities for the child to experience texture, taste, and sound. As the child is experiencing, provide the label. Let the child feel objects that are rough, smooth, scratchy, soft. Let him taste foods that are crunchy, soft, salty, sour, or sweet. Let the child hear music that is fast, slow, loud, or quiet. Follow up these activities to check for his understanding by seeing if the child can, e.g., feel sandpaper and label it as "rough."

Provide opportunities for the child to tell you about things that belong inside and things that belong outside school or home.

Provide opportunities for the child to experience nature and learn which things in nature are animate or inanimate — "alive" or "not alive."

Have the child go through a magazine and cut out items that go in a particular category, e.g., food, toys, clothing, etc. For the non-cutter, provide picture cards and have the child sort by categories.

Provide a box of grocery items and let the child open a play store. Have him sort them according to food or non-food groups, as well as, items to be refrigerated or items that can be kept at room temperature.

Notes

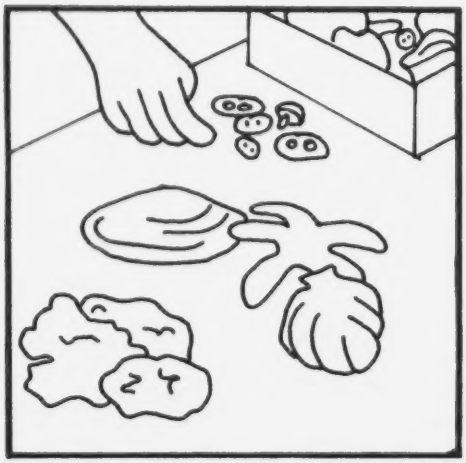
The Next Step

1.

Give the child a container of cherrios, pegs, and rubber bands (or any other three items) Ask him to place like objects in three smaller containers.

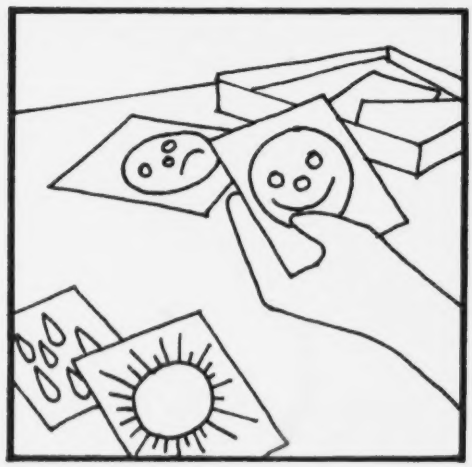
2.

Give the child a box of big and little items. Ask him to place the big items in one area and little items in another area.

3. 

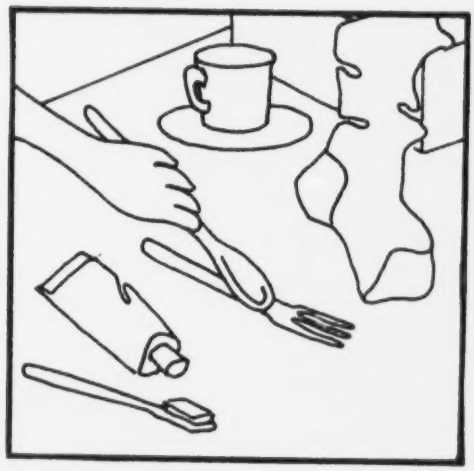
Give the child a box of three different sizes of the same items such as buttons, rocks, or shells. Ask him to sort them according to "big, bigger, biggest." Provide model initially and later remove model. (This activity may be used to teach small, smaller, and smallest.)

4.



Place "opposite" pictures in a box. Have the child sort the pictures classifying them as "opposites." Use pictures of a rainy day, a sunny day, a happy face, a sad face, a day scene, a night scene, etc.

5.



Give the child a box of "go together" objects such as a cup and saucer, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a shoe and sock, a comb and brush, and a fork and spoon. Have the child match the items that go together.

Notes

Working Independently Completing Tasks

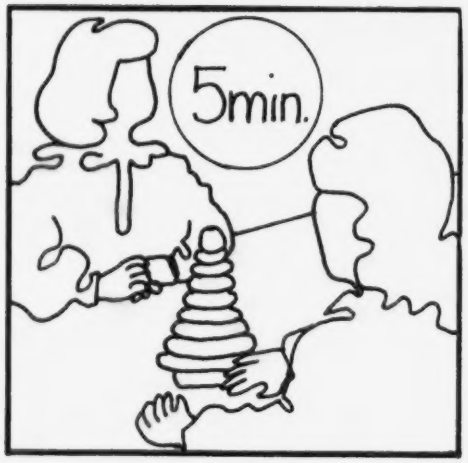
Little children need to learn to complete tasks without any assistance from adults. When parents and teachers are helping children to work on their own we sometimes make the mistake of completely ignoring them with the hope that this will foster independence. However, children need some input in order to persist. While a child is working on a task a wink, a pat on the back, a brief word of encouragement are useful tools to help the child stay with the task and work to completion.

Use only games, toys, and other activities that are of interest to the child, and within his range of ability, to help him learn to work independently.

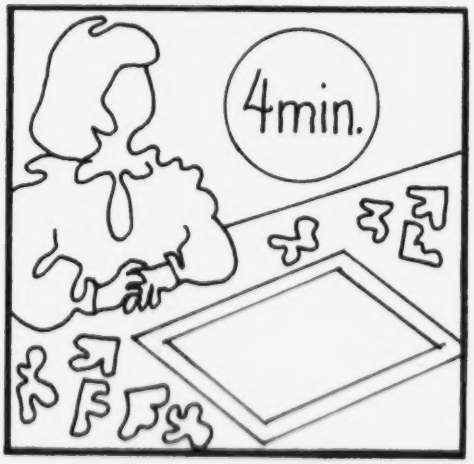
Talk with the child briefly before he begins the activity. Explain the basic steps and that the activity has a beginning, middle, and end. If the child indicates he is finished before the activity is complete a reminder like, "You are still in the middle of your puzzle", may help the child get back to the activity.

Encourage the child to complete an activity offering aid only when necessary. It is important neither to take over for the child, nor to let the child become too frustrated.

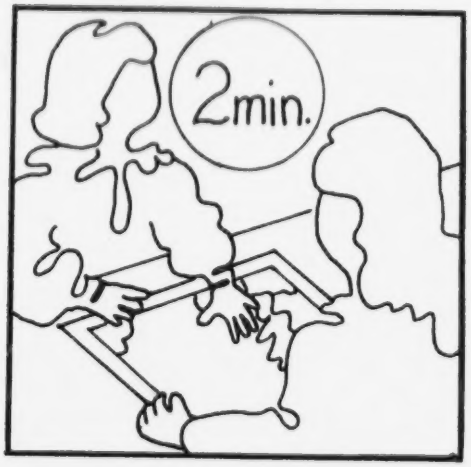
The Next Step

1. 

Determine how much time the child is capable of tending to a task.

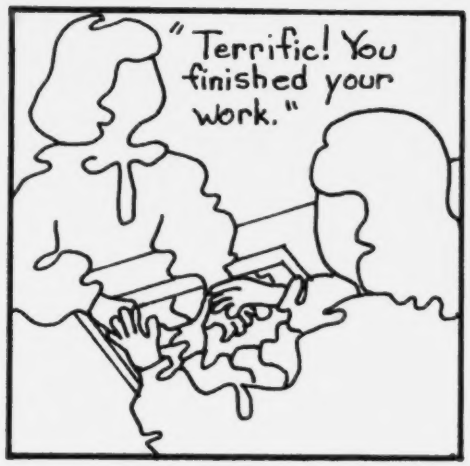
2. 

Give the child a task to complete successfully that will take one minute less time than he is capable of staying with a task.

3. 

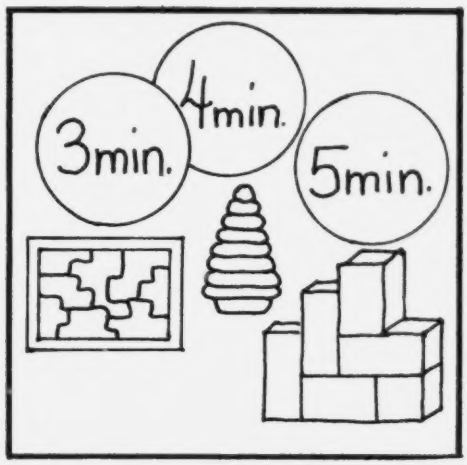
Praise the child's ability to stay with his work mid-way through the time allotted to complete the task.

4.



Praise the child with words and touch when he completes the task.

5.



Gradually increase the time expectation for completing a task. Also gradually increase the complexity of the task as the child's skills become more advanced.

Notes

About Project Enlightenment

Project Enlightenment is a comprehensive pre-school mental health program within the Wake County Public School System. In existence since 1969, the program includes a multi-disciplinary staff of early childhood educators, parent education workers, and psychologists. We work with children from birth to six years of age, their parents, and their teachers around concerns about child development and emotional growth. Our approach is based on the concepts of early intervention and prevention. Since children cannot always have access to trained specialized mental health personnel, it is important that the adults in a child's life gain support and skills which will enable them to help the child realize his or her fullest potential. Our approach does not emphasize problems, diagnostic labels, and weaknesses, but rather focuses on accentuating the existing strengths in the home and school. This positive, educational approach helps people to help themselves, and they continue to help themselves after our involvement is over.

We provide consultation to day care, pre-school, and kindergarten teachers in an effort to help them identify troubled children and increase their ability to work effectively with these children, as well as to help them do a better job of meeting the emotional and developmental needs of all their students. Project Enlightenment also offers a variety of teacher inservice programs and training opportunities for university students and staff of other community agencies.

Our parent services component offers both parent workshops and short term counseling to parents of preschoolers. Many of the workshops deal with

everyday parental concerns; others deal with topics of interest to certain groups of parents such as first-time parents, or parents of handicapped children.

TALKline (833-1515) is a telephone information and counselor service available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00-10:00 and 1:00-2:00. A Lending Resource Library containing numerous books on child development, parenting, and mental health issues is available to the community.

Project Enlightenment operates a preschool classroom which demonstrates a mainstreaming approach. Students who have an emotional, social and/or learning problem attend preschool with others who have no identified problems.

Visitors are welcome. For further information call 919-755-6935.

Please plan to visit us and share our enthusiasm and interest in working with young children!

Alice K. Barrows
Project Director

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discusses language development from birth to five years.

1 to 4 copies - 30¢ each 5 and over - 25¢ each

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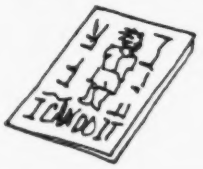

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